

WE CLAIM:

1. A monoclonal antibody capable of binding to a human CD40 antigen located on the surface of a human B cell, wherein the binding of the antibody to the CD40 antigen prevents the growth or differentiation of the B cell.
2. The monoclonal antibody of claim 1 selected from the group consisting of 5D12, 3A8 and 3C6.
3. The monoclonal antibody of claim 2 which is 5D12.
4. The monoclonal antibody of claim 2 which is 3A8.
5. The monoclonal antibody of claim 2 which is 3C6.
6. A method for preventing or treating an antibody-mediated disease in a patient, the method comprising administering to a patient in need of such treatment a therapeutically effective amount of a monoclonal antibody capable of binding to a human CD40 antigen located on the surface of a human B cell, wherein the binding of the antibody to the CD40 antigen prevents the growth or differentiation of the B cell, in a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.
7. The method of claim 6 wherein the antibody-mediated disease is selected from the group consisting of IgE-mediated disease, sytematic lupus erythematosus (SLE), primary biliary cirrhosis (PBC), and idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP).
8. The method of claim 6 wherein the monoclonal antibody is selected from the group consisting of 5D12, 3A8 and 3C6.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 5D12.
10. The method of claim 8 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3A8.
- 5 11. The method of claim 8 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3C6.
12. The method of claim 7 wherein the antibody-mediated disease is SLE.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein the monoclonal antibody is selected
10 from the group consisting of 5D12, 3A8 and 3C6.
14. The method of claim 13 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 5D12.
15. The method of claim 13 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3A8.
- 15 16. The method of claim 13 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3C6.
17. The method of claim 7 wherein the antibody-mediated disease is PBC.
- 20 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the monoclonal antibody is selected
from the group consisting of 5D12, 3A8 and 3C6.
19. The method of claim 18 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 5D12.
- 25 20. The method of claim 18 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3A8.
21. The method of claim 18 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3C6.
22. The method of claim 7 wherein the antibody-mediated disease is ITP.

23. The method of claim 22 wherein the monoclonal antibody is selected from the group consisting of 5D12, 3A8 and 3C6.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 5D12.

25. The method of claim 23 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3A8.

26. The method of claim 23 wherein the monoclonal antibody is 3C6.

27. A CD40 antigen epitope immunoreactive with an anti-CD40 monoclonal antibody wherein the binding of said monoclonal antibody to a human CD40 antigen located on the surface of a human B cell prevents the growth or differentiation of the B cell.

28. The epitope of claim 27 wherein the monoclonal antibody is selected from the group consisting of 5D12, 3A8 and 3C6.